

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 6054

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, MO
SUBJ: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON MOROCCAN PRISONERS

REF: (A) STATE 260997, (B) RABAT 3564, (C) CASABLANCA A-3, 3/15/77

1. OUR BEST READING ON QUESTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN MOROCCO REMAINS AS REPORTED REFTEL (B). THIS INFORMATION WAS INCORPORATED INTO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY EVALUATION PLAN FOR MOROCCO OF JULY 1, 1977. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ARRIVED AT FIGURE OF 200 POLITICAL PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES IN MOROCCO, NOR WHAT PRECISELY IS COVERED BY ITS DEFINITION OF A "POLITICAL" PRISONER. WE NOTE THAT OF SOME 189 EXTREME LEFTISTS TRIED IN CASABLANCA AT BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, ABOUT 133 PRESENT FOR TRIAL WERE SENTENCED TO PRISON (39 OTHERS WERE SENTENCED IN ABSENTIA) (SEE REF C). THIRTY OTHER LEFTISTS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN UNDER DETENTION SINCE LAST MAY IN CONNECTION WITH CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES WHICH ALSO INVOLVED A NUMBER OF SUBSEQUENTLY DEPORTED FRENCH COOPERANTS (RABAT 2937). THIS GROUP HAD NOT YET BEEN TRIED. IN ADDITION, SOCIALIST UNION OF POPULAR FORCES (USFP) CLAIMS THAT BETWEEN 150 AND 200 OF ITS MEMBERS ARE IN PRISON FOR POLITICAL REASONS (ALL BUT SEVEN TRIED AND SENTENCED). THESE NUMBERS DO NOT INCLUDE PRISONERS CONVICTED FOR PARTICIPATION IN COUP ATTEMPTS OF 1971 AND 1972.

2. WE ARE UNABLE TO SUBSTANTIATE, BEYOND FOREGOING REPORT
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OF 30 DETAINED LEFTISTS, THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CLAIM THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED PRISONERS ARE DETAINED SECRETLY "EITHER FOR THEIR LEFT WING SYMPATHIES, OR BECAUSE OF ETHNIC LINKS WITH THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA TERRITORY." THIS ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED TO US BY KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES. AS TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CLAIM THAT PRISONERS KEPT IN PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT COMMUNICATION, ARE LIABLE TO TORTURE, AND SOME HAVE DIED OR BEEN DISABLED AS

RESULT OF TORTURE, THIS MAY RELATED PRIMARILY TO THOSE ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN 1971 AND 1972 COUP ATTEMPTS, AS NOTED IN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY EVALUATION PLAN FOR MOROCCO. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT SITUATION IS NOW MUCH IMPROVED, AND THAT PARTICIPATION IN NEW PARLIAMENT BY A BROAD SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES REFLECTS A MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE AUTHORITIES AND OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS ALIKE.

3. WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE GOM IS CONSIDERING ISSUING A DENIAL OF THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT, BUT DO NOT HAVE OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN AFFAIRS OMAR BELKORA TOLD US NOVEMBER 3 THAT, WHILE THE MINISTRY HAD AN ONGOING CORRESPONDENCE WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, HE KNEW OF NO MINISTRY REACTION THUS FAR TO THE REPORT. MEANWHILE, THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO LOCAL PRESS PLAY ON THE REPORT.

4. WE WOULD APPRECIATE TEXT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT, WHICH MAY ENABLE US TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON CHARGES SET FORTH.
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